

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

- (a) at a receiving node of a communication network, receiving a request to schedule at least one timeslot of a recurrent cycle for receipt of burst transmissions from a sending node of the network;
- (b) in response to the scheduling request, selecting at least one timeslot of the cycle in a manner which is independent of timeslot selections to be made by other existing receiving nodes of the network for receipt of burst transmissions; and
- (c) communicating the selected timeslot or timeslots to the sending node.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

at the sending node, determining at least one time within the recurrent cycle at which bursts need to depart in order to arrive at the receiving node within [[a]] the selected timeslot or timeslots; and

in at least one instance of the recurrent cycle, transmitting a burst at least at one of the times that have been determined.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting non-receipt of a scheduled burst at the receiving node;
selecting a timeslot in substitution for the timeslot of the non-received burst; and
communicating the selected substitute timeslot to the sending node.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the selection of a substitute timeslot comprises choosing between two alternatives, which are: selecting a timeslot that is still unscheduled, and selecting a timeslot that has already been scheduled.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

 said receiving node is one of at least a first and a second receiving node;
 the first and second receiving nodes each select at least one timeslot in which bursts are to be received; and the method further comprises, at the sending node:
 determining a departure time within the recurrent cycle for bursts which are to be received at the first receiving node in the timeslot which it has selected;
 assigning said departure time to at least one burst destined for the first receiving node;
 determining a departure time within the recurrent cycle for bursts which are to be received at the second receiving node in the timeslot which it has selected;
 detecting at least one instance of conflict in which the departure time of bursts destined for the first receiving node overlaps the departure time of bursts destined for the second receiving node; and
 reassigning the assigned departure time to at least one burst destined for the second receiving node, such that said departure time is no longer available to bursts destined for the first receiving node.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the reassigning step is conditional on the outcome of step of deciding whether or not to reassign.

7. (New) A method in a communication network wherein each receiving node of the communication network is capable of communicating with a plurality of sending nodes and each sending node of the communication network is capable of communicating with a plurality of receiving nodes, the method comprising:

 receiving at a first receiving node a request to schedule a timeslot of a recurrent cycle for receipt of burst transmissions from a first sending node;
 selecting a first timeslot of the cycle in response to the scheduling request, wherein the first timeslot is selected in a manner which is independent of timeslot

selections to be made by the others of the plurality of receiving nodes for receipt of burst transmissions; and

communicating the first timeslot to the first sending node.

8. (New) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

at the first sending node, determining at least one time within the recurrent cycle at which bursts need to depart in order to arrive at the first receiving node within the first timeslot; and

in at least one instance of the recurrent cycle, transmitting a burst at least at one of the times that have been determined.

9. (New) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

detecting non-receipt of a scheduled burst at the first receiving node;

selecting a timeslot in substitution for the timeslot of the non-received burst; and

communicating the selected substitute timeslot to the first sending node.

10. (New) The method of claim 3, wherein the selection of a substitute timeslot comprises selecting a timeslot that is still unscheduled or selecting a timeslot that has already been scheduled.

11. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the communication network includes the first receiving node and at least a second receiving node, the first receiving node to receive a burst in the first timeslot and the second receiving to receive a burst in a second timeslot, the method further comprising, at the sending node:

determining a departure time within the recurrent cycle for a burst which is to be received at the first receiving node in the first timeslot;

assigning said departure time to a burst destined for the first receiving node;

determining a departure time within the recurrent cycle for a burst which is to be received at the second receiving node in the second timeslot;

detecting at least one instance of conflict in which the departure time of a burst destined for the first receiving node overlaps the departure time of a burst destined for the second receiving node; and

reassigning the assigned departure time to a burst destined for the second receiving node, such that said departure time is no longer available to a burst destined for the first receiving node.

12. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the reassigning step is conditional on the outcome of step of deciding whether or not to reassign.